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OBSERVATIONS.

It is reported that the saloon keepers of Lincoln subscribed a certain sum of money and placed it in the hands of Messrs. Billingsley and Greene with instructions to see that Excisemen Harpham and Brown were defeated and Messrs. Bartlett and Barth nominated to take their place. Bohemians were brought in loads to the polling places and it is supposed that they voted for the choice of the saloons. Supported by such an element the republican nominees for excisemen run a risk of being defeated by the votes of all the people who believe that saloons should be closed and opened and conducted as the law prescribes. The impractical who believe that saloons and all drinking can be abolished are not in sympathy with the Slocum law or with any law which seeks to mitigate the evils of the saloon and prevent minors having any access to it, nevertheless there is no such thing as prohibition in fact in the states where it is a part of the law. On the other hand where the saloon law is rigidly enforced, minors are protected and drinking places are closed at reasonable hours. With a conscientious mayor, the disgraceful immunity enjoyed by the Lindell saloon would be revoked. The public-spirited have long hoped that a new regime would be inaugurated with a new mayor but with an excise board in sympathy with the saloons the most indefatigable and upright mayor can not enforce the law against the saloons or against gambling or against anything else which makes the modern city a Gomorrah.

On another page of this issue a quotation from an article on municipal misrule by Prof. Baldwin in the April Self Culture, is printed. Writers on economic subjects all over the country are trying to find out why it is that American cities are run for the benefit of a few politicians willing to go to the trouble of scraping the low places at every primary for the votes they need. Many of these writers agree that it is because the enemies of society are united, while the good people are divided and vote for this or that exciseman or mayor under the impression that they are voting to sustain the national administration or against it, and that their vote will have an influence upon free trade, expansion or protection. The questions which concern the city and the citizens are let alone by the men who shout the loudest on the Fourth of July and are frantically enthusiastic whenever a procession of soldiers goes by or the achievements of the United States are rhetorically mentioned. They do not realize that when men like Mr. Barth are nominated at the primaries, it is because they—lovers of law and order, faithful attendants at church and devoted to all kinds of ornamental goodness—have stayed at home or in their offices and shops and allowed the rabble that hangs about saloons to nominate a man who will do their bidding.

It makes very little difference what party such a man belongs to. The rabble is clever and rarely makes a mistake in choosing an instrument. The question that every man who thinks he loves his country ought to settle before he votes for the nominees of the saloon crowd, is whether such men as excisemen will run the town wide open or will enforce laws made to protect unsuspecting and inexperienced youth from temptation.

It is an auspicious sign when the ministers of any town begin to lament and denounce local iniquity. It is an unpopular thing to do. Politicians have always insisted that a preacher should denounce sin in general terms and if he must particularize it is his business to select a Turkish or German or English or Spanish sin. It was not so that Jeremiah or Jonah preached to the kings and prominent men of Israel, but then they were never very popular and they owed the discomfort of their days to the intense interest they took in purely local matters.

The sermon of the Reverend Arthur Frost Newell last Sunday on corruption in Lincoln and the men and the ring responsible for it (aided by indifferent taxpayers) reminded me of the old prophets denouncing cruelty and robbery and lust. There is little doubt that the ministers of Lincoln can make it a better city if they will examine the state of things as they actually exist here and exhort the indifferent pewholders to lay aside national politics and vote for men in the

coming city election who are under no obligations to the enemies of society.

The financial condition of the city is improving slowly. But the mayor has used his office to grant illegal favors to the saloon keepers and the gamblers. Reform was never more urgent, but it is questionable if it can be accomplished. The election of Mr. Bartlett and Mr. Barth would be a calamity, considering the conditions of their nomination, but the men who elect them under such auspices will have no business to complain when whiskey is sold to their minor sons and the saloons are run wide open all night and all day on Sunday.

Democracy as exhibited in the municipal government of America is, so far, a failure. Municipal democracy on this side the ocean is an oligarchy of the vicious and the dishonest. The residents of the city who pay the taxes, or the sum collected from each one on the basis of what he owns, have practically the least to say about how the money is spent. It is actually spent in salaries to incompetent politicians whose one accomplishment is a knowledge of how to work the primaries and in jobs. It should be spent on public improvements and in wages to specialists in sanitation, city police government, and city legislation. But so long as the idea is strongly imbedded that the tax contributions from the community belong to the boys, the taxpayers, many of the heaviest of whom in Lincoln are women, will continue to be robbed. If the funds were properly administered, there would be enough to pave the streets, to dismiss the drunken policemen and hire sober, intelligent men, to redeem the bonds, to build new schools, and after all this was accomplished to lower the taxes and make Lincoln a desirable city to emigrate to. Taking the depression in real estate into consideration with the rate of taxation, Lincoln has been avoided by prospecting travellers, which fact has lowered the demand and depressed values. The depression is directly therefore the result of maladministration and there is very little prospect, even when other property advances, that real estate will be perceptibly affected.

It is said that seventy per cent of a people must become disaffected before a revolution can take place. Not until the rule of the worst and the few has become so oppressive as to interfere more seriously with the rights of the citizens than at present will enough of them be willing to discard national issues in local politics and destroy the system which has been destroying them.

The death of Clerk Sam E. Low, of the district court, in a health resort in New Mexico was not unexpected, as he has been suffering with an acute

pulmonary affection for months. Incipient tuberculosis induced him to come to Nebraska twelve years ago and his health was greatly improved by the change, but he disobeyed the essential condition of a complete cure, an open air existence, and has been steadily failing for a year.

Mr. Low was only thirty-three years old. He had a remarkable gift of friendship, a birthright as difficult of cultivation as the poetic instinct. All men, except a few degenerates, loved him and his popularity was a tribute to his amiable character, his kindness, probity and ability. His dark, sorrowful eyes, larger for the pain he suffered and the consciousness that his pilgrimage was nearly over, lighted a face of unusual beauty and strength. He was much beloved by his associates and the community which elected him district clerk had never any reason to regret it. He belonged to that small class of politicians who are nominated because of a unanimous conviction which sometimes seizes a convention that the candidate is all right and eminently fitted for the place he asks for. In Mr. Low's case, he received the nomination in spite of an evil influence exerted against him, and his nomination and election was one of the first signs of the waning power of that influence.

Mr. Low's intimate friends were perhaps few in number, (for, in spite of his large sympathies, he was reserved and unlikely to make advances), but among the few who asked and to whom he gave confidence and affection, his loss is sharply regretted. Mr. Low's parents live at Stuttgart, Ark. He has three brothers and one sister.

Along with the regret that American soldiers are being wounded and killed in Luzon comes the conviction that the United States can do no less than reduce the natives to order. A policy which would leave the islands we have started to rescue in insurrection and the prey of any nation which chooses to conquer them, is incomprehensible and would make us ridiculous to the world of nations. The politicians who advocate so silly and vacillating a policy are suspected of duplicity or self-deception. If this is not what ails them it is something worse, in the nature of softening of the brain or a deterioration of the gray matter that does the thinking.

It is being proven by the army investigating board that the great American stomach which rejected the canned products of a great American industry were justified in so doing. The soldiers who persisted in eating the canned meat in spite of the warning nausea, paid for it by sickness. The investigations of the board are conducted with a thoroughness and an absence of policy that encourages everybody, and especially friends of the private soldier, to be